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JOHN C. CALHOUN.

In attempting to present to the American public, a brief sketch of the life and political career of the distinguished statesman, whose name stands at the head of this article, we are not insensible of the importance and responsibility of the task we have undertaken. Perhaps the political destiny of these United States will not be more distinguished by any other circumstance, from that of those other republics, which flash but a momentary splendour on the page of history, than by the wide extent of territory over which they stretch. In a representative republic, whose population spreads over twenty-four States, and is destined to cover a much greater number, a faithful delineation of the conduct and character of living statesmen, is one of the most important functions of a free press. To the great mass of the American people, those distinguished politicians, whose united talents constitute the political wealth of the republic, must of necessity be personally unknown; yet, as all political power emanates directly or indirectly from the people, a correct knowledge of the conduct, character, and qualifications of those who have had a leading agency in the various departments of public service, is of indispensable importance to a judicious exercise of that great attribute of popular sovereignty, the elective franchise. Under such circumstances, we feel well warranted in the assertion, that, without the agency of the press, the republican form of government could not be practically and beneficially extended, much beyond that contracted sphere, in which the people could derive their knowledge of public men from personal observation and acquaintance. In this country, therefore, we must resort to the journals of the day, those chronicles of the passing time, for an authen-

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tic record of those political measures, which reflect the character of the statesman who may have been instrumental in devising them. But the events of even a very short political life, are diffused over such a mighty and formless mass of newspaper detail, that they are quite inaccessible, not only to the great mass of the people, but even to those who have a more immediate agency in the transaction of public affairs. They are, of course, as unprofitable as the metal in the mine, until they have received a current form from the hands of the biographical compiler. These views show at once the responsibility and the importance of our present undertaking. That responsibility we most sensibly feel. He who undertakes to write the life of a living statesman, is giving information in which the people are directly and immediately interested. He is, therefore, under the strongest obligations to give a faithful narrative of facts, and an impartial delineation of character. Under these impressions, the following sketch is presented to the public. We have collected the facts, by consulting such persons and documents, as for the last two or three years have fallen within the reach of our researches.

John C. Calhoun, the present Secretary of War, is about forty-two years of age, and was born in the District of Abbeville, South Carolina. His father, Patrick Calhoun, emigrated from Pennsylvania before the commencement of the revolutionary war, and was one of the first settlers of the Upper Country, of the then Province of South Carolina. He was an active whig during our struggle for independence; and, it is believed, was a member of the Legislature of the State, under its different modifications, from the first organisation of a revolutionary government, till his death. In consequence of this latter event, it devolved upon the mother of John C. to superintend his education. After a considerable conflict between maternal fondness and a sense of duty, she sent him from home to the Academy of the Reverend Dr. Waddel, where he laid the foundation of his classical and scientific attainments. Before he entered the grammar school, having

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had access to a good library, he became master of most of the ancient and modern historians. History was, indeed, his favourite study; and after he commenced his classical course, he would frequently steal an hour from Virgil to devote to Plutarch. It is related of him by his schoolmates, that while at this Academy, he had an impediment or hesitancy in his speech, which, added to his unusual diffidence, rendered his prospectsof eminence as a speaker quite unflattering. But his subsequent brilliant career as a parliamentary speaker, adds another proof to that furnished by the great orator of antiquity, that all minor obstacles will vanish before the persevering energies of a great mind. Having finished his preparatory studies, he became a member of Yale College, and graduated with much distinction, leaving behind him a high reputation for talents. In College he was distinguished for the power of investigation; and it is said, would never adopt any doctrine, until, by placing it in all its practical bearings, he obtained a kind of anticipated experience of its operation. He was most distinguished for his proficiency in metaphysics, mathematics, and what are usually denominated the precise sciences. These, better than any artificial system of logic, qualify the mind for profound and accurate reasoning. While in College, he manifested a great predilection for political inquiries; and it is said, the course of the lecture was sometimes suspended, by his friendly disputations with Dr. Dwight, on the principles of government. Mr. Calhoun was one of the few republicans at that time in the College; and although the very name was in some degree odious, and exposed a young man to many disadvantages in his career of literary fame and distinction, he always maintained his opinions with that firmness and independence, which has since characterized his conduct as a statesman. Notwithstanding his supposed political heresies, Dr. Dwight entertained a very high opinion of his talents, and foretold the political eminence which he would one day attain.

In preparing himself for the practice of the law, he spent

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some considerable time in attending the lectures of Judge Reeve, at Litchfield, in Connecticut. During this time, he studied with great attention the character of the people of the north eastern section of the Union; and it was probably the knowledge thus acquired, that enabled him, during the darkest moments of our late contest with Great Britain, to contemplate without alarm the storm which lowered in that quarter of our horizon, and which some of our politicians looked upon as precursive of the approaching dissolution of the Union. He never doubted that the great body of citizens in New England were firmly attached to the Union.

The violent opposition made in that section of the country to the general government, he ascribed to the disappointed ambition of the leading men, who saw that the sceptre of power had passed from their hands. This opinion is confirmed by the fact, that no sooner did the Hartford Convention unfurl even their dubious and equivocal banner of disunion, than they were deserted by the great mass of their former adherents.

While at the law school, Mr. Calhoun was much distinguished by his talent for extemporaneous debating. Such were his powers of rapid and lucid arrangement, that he would answer the desultory arguments of some half a dozen speakers, in a speech of such logical and systematic combination, as would seem to indicate the most formal preparation. At the bar, though he was never fond of the practice of law, he soon rose to the first grade of professional eminence. He appeared, however, to feel that he was not in his appropriate element, and would frequently exert himself to break the shackles of an arbitrary and technical system, and expatiate in the wider field of reason and natural justice. Soon after he commenced the practice of the law, he was elected a member of the State Legislature. In this body, he soon became distinguished as a young man of uncommon powers of argument; and his comprehensive views, and disinterested principles, attracted universal confidence. From the usual character of the measures of a State Legislature, it will not

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be expected of us, to point out particularly those in which he took a leading part. It will be sufficient to remark, in general terms, that upon all subjects, his views were those of a disinterested politician.

Although from the beginning a firm and decided republican, his principles were too national and elevated to embrace the narrow and selfish artifices to which political partisans too frequently resort. Intrigue he always detested, even in the members of his own party; and we have frequently heard it remarked, that amidst the violence which characterized the measures of the leading men, when he came into the Legislature, he stood aloof from their bickerings, pursuing the independent and erect course dictated by his own judgment. He seems, indeed, always to have disdained to be the follower of men, at the expense of principle. He had been but two years a member of the State Legislature, when he was elected a member of Congress. He took his seat in this body, for the first time, in that eventful session, during which war was declared against Great Britain. To estimate the character and importance of that measure, it will be necessary to recur to the situation of the country at that time, growing out of her relations with Great Britain. It will be recollected, that in the year 1806, Great Britain declared a large portion of the continent of Europe to be in a state of blockade, although it was known to the whole world that she did not even pretend to apply an adequate force, to give that measure the character of a blockade, under the law of nations. In the spirit, and strictly within the principle of this first encroachment, the governments of France and Great Britain kept up a cross-fire of hostile regulations, which finally resulted in the annihilation of all that part of our commerce which we prosecuted with either of the powers at war, or their dependencies. By the British orders in council, our merchant ships, destined for the ports of France, or her dependencies, were liable to capture and condemnation; and by the French decrees, they were liable to similar penalty, when destined for the ports of

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Great Britain, or her dependencies. A glance at the map of the world will show, that these lawless edicts had swept nearly the entire mass of our commerce from the ocean. After a protracted course of negotiation, and of earnest, but ineffectual remonstrance on the part of our government, Congress, to test the sincerity of belligerent professions, and evince the spirit of forbearing moderation which actuated our councils, passed a law, by which the President was directed to open our occluded ports to that belligerent who should first repeal her unjust edicts, and keep them closed against the other, if she persisted in hers. This law induced France to withdraw her injurious decrees, but produced no effect upon Great Britain.

In addition to the regulations injurious to our commerce, the national ships of Great Britain had been for years in the constant habit of impressing native American seamen from our merchant vessels, by the order of the British government, under the pretence of reclaiming British deserters. Thousands of our citizens had been torn from all the endearments of home, and consigned to slavery in the British ships of war, at the arbitrary discretion of British naval officers.

Such was the tenure by which the American seamen held their freedom, and such the state of our relations with Great Britain, when Mr. Calhoun entered Congress. He was an able and decided advocate of the war; and it is believed, that no member was more instrumental in bringing about that event, which fixed an important era in our national history. He was indeed of opinion, that the war ought to have been declared at an earlier period; and had decidedly disapproved of the restrictive system, in the extent to which it had been carried. As a mean of compelling foreign nations to do us justice, he esteemed it inefficient; producing more than the privations of war, without exciting that tone of patriotic feeling, which a righteous war always produces, and which constitutes the moral energy of a

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nation. He believed that our long acquiescence in foreign wrongs, was rapidly sinking the spirit of the nation, and was likely to produce, to use his own language, "a sense of national inferiority, the greatest of political evils." As chairman of the Committee of Foreign Relations, he presented to Congress the report, or manifesto, which, after reciting the wrongs committed on our commerce and seamen by Great Britain, recommended an appeal to arms. His views of the war, however, are more fully and distinctly given in the speeches delivered by him in Congress, on the various propositions which related to that measure. In answer to those who opposed the declaration of war, he admitted and deplored the fact, that we were not as well prepared as we ought to have been. But, appealing to Mr. Randolph, whose argument he was answering, he asked him emphatically, whose fault it was, that due preparations had not been made for the storm, which had been so obviously brewing for many years, during which time, many of the gentlemen who now insisted that we are unprepared for war, had been members of the national councils? He conceived that the fact of their having been in the opposition, was no apology to the country for neglecting to propose what they now admitted to have been the duty of Congress. He believed the voice of the people was decidedly for the war, a state of things, which ought to be an almost indispensable preliminary to the declaration of a war by such a government as ours. That while we were preparing the physical means, by levying taxes, and enlisting and organizing armies, there was danger of losing, what was incomparably more important, that moral energy which was intimately connected with the existing tone of public feeling. In a popular war, a free people, abounding in resources, will never want the means to prosecute it. In discussing the causes of the war, he disdained to inquire which of the belligerents had first commenced the system of regulations injurious to our commercial rights. He denied the right of retaliating altogether.

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That doctrine involves the extraordinary position, that the annihilation of neutral rights, is a lawful mean of assailing an adversary. Admitting that France had made regulations, which we had acquiesced in, to the injury of Great Britain, yet, when Great Britain captured our vessels for that injury, she clearly resorted to force for redress, which is the very definition of war. And even admitting that the war was rightful on the part of Great Britain, was it compatible with the spirit, the honour, or the interest of the nation, tamely and unresistingly to receive the blows of an adversary? Posterity will learn, with shame and astonishment, that although Great Britain was waging a destructive war upon our commerce and seamen, there were men in the councils of this country, who maintained that there was no just cause of war with that nation! On the subject of impressment, Mr. Calhoun contended, that the reclamation of deserters was a mere pretext on the part of the British ministry, and that their real object was to man their ships of war with the trained seamen of other nations. He appealed to authentic documents, to show that the subjects of Sweden, and other powers, had been impressed, where no mistake could possibly have resulted from similarity of language. He denied, however, that it was any justification of Great Britain, that she was honestly seeking her own deserters. It was a degradation of the sovereignty of the country, and a disgrace to her character, for a moment to permit a petty British officer to erect in our merchant ships a capricious and interested tribunal, to decide, without appeal, upon the fate and freedom of an American citizen. Here, again, Great Britain assumed the right of being her own judge, and redressing her own wrongs, in a matter involving American rights, and was thus committing war upon our citizens as well as on our commerce. He would not descend to inquire how many of our citizens had thus been deprived of their birthright by lawless violence. Fixing the number at the lowest estimate, he contended that the government was under the most solemn

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obligation to resist the violence, and to wipe out the stain which it had fixed upon the reputation of the country. The character of that nation must be low indeed, which can descend to compare the freedom of her citizens with the price of defending it.

Among the capital advantages which Mr. Calhoun anticipated from the war, was the establishment of the national character. Foreign nations entertained the opinion that our government was not capable of sustaining the shock, and meeting the exigencies of war. In fact, so long had we submitted to foreign wrongs, that we began to doubt our own powers of resistance. This most unfounded and dangerous idea, was inculcated by many distinguished politicians in our own country. It was openly declared, from high authority, that we had not received any injury, and if we had, we were not capable of avenging it. Mr. Calhoun conceived it all important to our future security, to dispel this illusion from the eyes of foreign powers, by practically demonstrating our capacities for war, of which he never entertained a doubt. In this point of view, he considered the late war not less important than the war of the revolution.—The latter secured to us a free government; the former would prove to ourselves and the world, that it was adequate to all the purposes for which it was created, and would exist as a durable and glorious monument of the wisdom and patriotism of those who framed it. In fact, it has been the unceasing effort of Mr. Calhoun, ever since he has been in the national councils, to impress upon the nation the important truth, that a government which has a character for imbecility, has no security against foreign aggression. It is in vain to rely on the force of reasoning, or the justice of other nations. All history is replete with proof, that nothing but power can command respect among nations; and when a nation ceases to be respected, she begins to be insulted. The opinion entertained of us by foreign nations, therefore, is no unimportant matter. Actual power can only repel ag-

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gression, but a character for power prevents it. It is truly gratifying to reflect on the effect of the late war upon the American character in foreign countries. Before that event, an American could scarcely hold up his head in Europe; the name was almost synonymous with impotence and contempt. Since, it has been customary for Englishmen, on the continent, to assume the American name, to insure respect and attention. The government, which it was supposed would crumble before the first blast of war, is now the admiration of the world. The nation that, a few years back, had scarcely a national ship on the ocean, is now looked upon as the power destined to humble the naval glories of Britain, and snatch the trident from her grasp! Such have been the effects of a war, which many distinguished men confidently predicted, would sink the administration, and ruin the country. During the whole progress of the conflict, Mr. Calhoun was one of its most ardent, firm, and persevering supporters. In the most gloomy hour of the contest, when the storm of invasion darkened our shores, and the fires of faction raged within, he stood at his post, fearless and inflexible, never at any moment despairing of the republic.

Mr. Calhoun has been the uniform advocate of a navy. When that measure was before Congress, he most heartily co-operated with his able colleague, Mr. Cheves, who was chairman of the naval committee, in carrying it through Congress. He esteems it the only species of force by which we can at once assail that power, with whom it will probably be our destiny to come most frequently in contact, and effectually defend our extensive maritime frontier from the ravages of an invader. He deems it the appropriate armour of a free people, as it furnishes protection to the country, without endangering her liberties. He also considers the navy as one of the ligaments which bind the union together. It is a power which the people look upon without jealousy. It is not likely, therefore, like the army, to be identified with the

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party in power. Its brilliant achievments will furnish a stock of national fame, in which every section of the country will be anxious to participate. Thus the bond which common interest renders strong, is made indissoluble by common glory.

The dethronement of the French Emperor, and the consequent change in the political and commercial relations of Continental Europe, gave rise to a bill repealing the embargo and non-importation acts. This bill was reported by Mr. Calhoun, as chairman of the committee on foreign relations, and ably supported by him in argument. Adverting to the origin of the restrictive system, and the grounds upon which it had been heretofore sustained, he said, it was a pacific policy, arising from the extraordinary state of the world at the time it was adopted, and was of course a temporary, rather than a permanent policy. It originated at a time when every power on the Continent was arrayed against Great Britain, and no country in Europe was interested in the maintenance of neutral rights. The occlusion of all the ports of the continent of Europe, against Great Britain, gave to the restrictive measures adopted by this country, an efficiency, of which they would be now deprived, by a revolution which had thrown open to the commerce of Great Britain all the ports of Europe, those of France excepted. He admitted that the restrictive system had been too far extended, and said that if he had been in Congress when it was first adopted, he should have recommended war in preference; but contended, that there would be no inconsistency on the part of the government, in abandoning a system founded on a state of things which no longer existed. He said, being in its origin a pacific measure, it had been continued, he confessed, not with his approbation, as a war measure: and derived its force, as a war measure, entirely from the exclusion of our enemy from the continent of Europe. "But now," said he, "most of the great powers of the continent are neutral as between the United States and Great Britain. We

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were contending for the freedom of trade, and ought to use every exertion to attach to our cause, Russia, Sweden, Holland, Denmark, and all the nations who had an interest in the freedom of the seas." "The commercial policy of Great Britain, infringed," he said, "upon the rights of all neutral powers; and if we would now and then open our ports and commerce to the nations on the continent, it would involve Great Britain in a very awkward and perplexing dilemma. She must either permit us to enjoy a lucrative commerce with those nations, or, by attempting to exclude them from our ports, by her system of paper blockades, she would force them to espouse the cause of America. The very option which would be thus presented to the British cabinet, would so embarrass them, as to produce a stronger motive for peace, on their part, than ten years' continuance of the present system, inoperative as it was now rendered by the change of circumstances." This is a very imperfect sketch of the views presented by Mr. Calhoun, in the discussion of the proposed repeal of the restrictive system. The peculiar character of the question rendered unnecessary an inquiry into the general policy of the restrictive measures as a substitute for war. But although Mr. C. repelled the insinuation of French influence, and vindicated the motives which led to the embargo, and non-importation acts, we plainly discover, that he thinks, they ought to have been temporary, and the mere preliminaries of war.

Towards the close of the late war, Mr. Dallas, then Secretary of the Treasury, submitted to Congress his celebrated bank scheme, for relieving the financial embarrassments of the government. The two distinctive features of the plan were, that the capital of the bank should consist principally of government stock, and that the bank should be required to make a loan of thirty millions of dollars to the government. Mr. Calhoun was opposed to this scheme, and proposed another, by which the principal part of the capital was to consist of treasury notes, which would supersede the necessity, on the

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part of the government, of obtaining a loan from the bank. It also contemplated a rigid enforcement of specie payments, and provided that the government should not have the power of suspending them. The principal argument urged in favour of the scheme of Mr Dallas, was its tendency to revive public credit, and thereby promote the facility of obtaining favourable loans. It was contended, that by rendering the government stock subscribable to the Bank, the price of that stock would be raised in the market, and the credit of the government would consequently receive a corresponding elevation. The speech which Mr. Calhoun delivered on the relative merits of the two plans, was never published, which we extremely regret, as, from the description we have had of it, as well as from the effect it produced, it was probably one of the most luminous and irresistible arguments, ever delivered in Congress. He had been detained from Congress by sickness during the early part of the session, and when he arrived at Washington, Mr. Dallas' plan had been matured; yet his speech immediately revolutionized the opinion of the house on this important and difficult subject, and his substitute received a majority of votes; though from subsequent events, neither that nor Mr. Dallas' was carried into effect. We are however left to infer the views of Mr. Calhoun, partly from what we have heard, and partly from a consideration of the subject itself. His scheme, we conceive, had the advantage of the other, in effecting its immediate object more directly, more certainly, and on terms more advantageous to the government. By the privilege given to treasury notes of being subscribable to the bank, those notes could have been in due time sold, above par, to the extent of thirty millions, which was the amount of the Bank capital, for which treasury notes were subscribable. Thus the government would have sold its paper at a considerable premium, instead of 12 per cent. discount, which had been the case in previous loans.

We cannot perceive how Mr. Dallas' plan was calculated to increase the credit of the government. It is certain that

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the stock of the government, then in circulation, would have constituted the capital of the bank. The plan then would have resulted in giving to those, from whom the government had already borrowed on very disadvantageous terms, the additional premium of the bank dividend. But, would this have raised the credit of the government with future lenders? The ability of a government to obtain favourable loans, depends entirely upon the strength of the assurance which the lender has, that the government will comply with its engagements. This assurance can be founded only upon good faith on the part of the government, in relation to all previous contracts, and its capacity to comply with all future contracts. But good faith cannot surely require more than a compliance with previous contracts. Individuals who had loaned their money, at a very high rate, had no right, moral or legal, to expect an additional premium. It is perfectly obvious, therefore, that by insuring to previous lenders more than it had promised, which would have been effected by Mr. Dallas' plan, the government could not increase its credit with future lenders. Now, Mr. Calhoun's scheme left the previous creditors of the government precisely where their contract had placed them; and held out to future lenders, those privileges which the other scheme proposed giving to persons from whom there was nothing to expect, at least as the immediate result of the scheme. There can scarcely be a doubt upon the whole, that, as a scheme for raising money promptly and advantageously, Mr. Calhoun's was decidedly preferable to the other. But there was another point of view in which Mr. Dallas' plan was more objectionable. It proposed that the Bank should make a loan to the government of thirty millions of dollars. It was this feature which excited the most serious alarm in the mind of Mr. Calhoun, and, we think, justly excited it. There is perhaps no proposition more true in bank economy, than that long loans are incompatible with specie payments. Recurring to the then state of the curren-

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cy, we have no hesitation in asserting, that the projected bank, being bound by its charter to make a loan to the government, to the extent of three fifths of its capital, would have found it impossible to continue them. To suppose that, a bank which gives its notes payable on demand, for the paper of the government, payable at six or twelve months, can continue to redeem those notes with specie, is of all suppositions the most wild and extravagant. Thus would the only efficient instrument in the power of the government for restoring the degraded currency of the country, have been converted into an engine for perpetuating that most enormous national evil. Thus would the government itself have been accessary to a state of things, which it was under the most sacred constitutional obligations to remedy. We think Mr. Calhoun was well warranted in the assertion, that no measure had ever been submitted to the consideration of Congress, likely to produce such deleterious effects upon the liberties of the country, as the bank scheme submitted by the secretary of the treasury. But the memory of that independent and virtuous statesman is not the less sacred on account of a single error, on a subject of great obscureness and difficulty!

During the session of Congress which immediately succeeded the termination of the war with Great Britain, a committee was appointed to take into consideration the state of the national currency. Of this committee he was nominated chairman. To restore the medium of exchanges from its disordered condition to a state of soundness, the committee recommended the establishment of a national bank. We believe it is to the able, indefatigable, and ceaseless exertions of Mr. Calhoun, that the country is indebted for the success of that important measure. The number of commercial interests and political prejudices which stood opposed to the establishment of a national bank, rendered his task peculiarly difficult and delicate. In a speech of uncommon ability, he portrayed the effects of the existing state of the currency. He said the paper of the state banks was extremely depreciated, varying in degree

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according to the section of the country in which it circulated. This, he contended, was a deep stain upon public and private faith, which it behooved Congress to wipe away before it became indelible. If the remedy were not thus applied, the disease, he feared, would acquire such strength, as to defy the powers of the general government. The constitutional power of Congress to regulate the currency, a power of the utmost national importance, was, in point of fact, usurped by some two hundred and sixty banks, responsible to no power for their issues, and impelled by their thirst for gain, to a course of the most ruinous extravagance. There were not in the vaults of the banks more than fifteen millions of dollars in specie, and yet they had two hundred millions of their paper in circulation. He said that the quantity of circulating bank paper had, within five or six years, increased from eighty or ninety, to two hundred millions, producing a constant depreciation in the value of money, unsettling the value of every thing else, and destroying the relative rights of the different classes of the community. The laws regulating the current coin, he said, were a mockery of legislation, when the excessive issues of bank paper had banished gold and silver from the country. To the suspension of specie payments, on the part of the state banks, he ascribed the existing derangements of the currency. He said the banks had undertaken to do a new business, uncongenial with their nature, in making long loans to government, a practice wholly inconsistent with specie payments. Those who believed the existing state of things would cure itself, believed what was in the nature of things impossible. The banks were making large dividends, of from 12 to 20 per cent., and the effect of resuming specie payments, would be the immediate reduction of these extraordinary profits, for a time, to almost nothing. Banks must change their nature, before they would concur in doing what it was their interest to prevent. He proceeded to show that the banks had the ability to resume specie payments, if they had the disposition. If they would consentaneously begin to dispose of their public stock, to call

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in their notes for the treasury notes in their possession, and moderately curtail their discounts, he conceived they would be able to redeem their notes with specie. After withdrawing, by the sale of part of their stock and treasury notes, twenty-five millions of their own notes from circulation, the rest would be appreciated nearly to par, and they would still have fifteen millions of disposable stock to send to Europe for specie. The only difficulty, that of producing concert, he said, it was the business of Congress to surmount. A national bank, paying specie itself, would have a tendency to produce a general resumption of specie payments, both by its influence and example. Such an institution would also enable the general government to resort to measures for coercing specie payments, which would be otherwise impracticable. The leading measure of this character would be, to deprive the banks refusing to pay specie, of all the profits arising from the business of the government, by prohibiting deposits with them, and refusing to receive their notes in payment of dues to the national treasury. This was as far as he was willing to go at present; but if the banks persisted in their present course, Congress would be under the necessity of resorting to measures of a deeper tone. Having thus pointed out the remedy of what he conceived to be the most deep seated and alarming evil that ever existed since the foundation of the government, he appealed to Congress, as the guardians of public faith, to interpose their power, and rescue the nation from the impending danger! In vain had the constitution provided for the equal distribution of the burdens of taxation, when one section of the country paid its taxes in a medium thirty per cent. less valuable than that in which other sections paid theirs. This was an effect calculated to jeopardize the union itself. He conjured Congress, by all the considerations which the character and destinies of the country could suggest, to apply the remedy then in their power, with firmness. Such is a meager sketch of the speech of Mr. Calhoun, which made so deep an impression upon Congress, that the bank bill passed by a considerable majority.

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Whether we consider the immediate effects of the bank, or its permanent influence on the state of the currency, it must be admitted to be an institution of the highest national importance. It has, notwithstanding the unskilful management of its first directions, realized, thus far, the great objects for which it was established. It has compelled the state banks to embrace one of two alternatives; either to resume and continue specie payments, or to close their operations. Thus, in a short time, spurious and depreciated paper will be banished from circulation, a medium of commerce substituted in its place, as uniform in its value as it is practicable to establish. It has been urged, as a complaint against the national bank, that it has not furnished a medium of equal value in every part of the union. To require this of the bank, is to require what its advocates never promised, and what every person who understands the subject, knows to be impossible. A bill redeemable in silver at Philadelphia or New-York, must, if the course of exchange is not favourable, upon the obvious principles of commerce, be less valuable at New-Orleans than at the place of issue; because the holder of the bill at New-Orleans, though absolutely certain of getting silver for it, must pay the expense of transporting the silver. And the depreciation will be precisely in proportion to the expense of transportation. In fact, the experience of the bank is conclusive on the subject. The first direction attempted to redeem, at each of the branches, the bills of all the others. This produced the utmost derangement in the distribution of the capital of the bank. The bills of the southern and western branches were carried, by the current of exchange, to the northern branches, and there presented for payment. The embarrassments resulting from such a state of things, are too obvious to need explanation. But we believe the clamours which so loudly assailed the bank, have in a great degree subsided. The extravagant speculators, who have been arrested in their course, have still the infatuation to call for a suspension of specie payments, and an indefinite issue of bank

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paper. But the sober, honest, and intelligent part of the community, look upon those advocates of the paper system, as men, under the influence of a species of derangement, and out of the reach of reason, argument, or experience.

To a statesman who takes a comprehensive view of the actual state of things in the United States, the necessity of such an institution as the national bank, must be almost self-evident. Whether it were not better that the circulating medium should consist wholly of the precious metals, is no longer a question open for discussion.

Banks have become so intimately incorporated with the various interests of society, that it only remains for the general government to exercise over them such a control, as will secure the national currency from ruinous derangement. Without such a control, no language can convey an adequate idea of the embarrassments in which the finances of the government would be perpetually involved, as well as the whole of the commercial transactions of the country. Each state is interested in having a depreciated currency, because it can the more easily pay its taxes and debts to the general government, in such a currency. The United States have immense bodies of land, which, if judiciously disposed of, will lighten the burden of taxation, for a long series of years. But will it not be the obvious interest of those states, whose citizens make the largest purchases of the public lands, to permit excessive issues of bank paper, that the debts they owe to the general government may be paid off in a depreciated medium. Experience has also shown, that those seaports where the circulating medium is most depreciated, engross the principal part of the importing business. If, for example, the currency of Maryland should be thirty per cent. less valuable than that of Massachusetts, the Boston merchant will find his interest in making Baltimore his port of entry ; because he can pay the imposts with little more than two thirds of the intrinsic amount he would have to pay at Boston. Thus, interest would prompt the importing and land purchasing

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states, to run the race of depreciation, each contending for the foremost rank. And in this contention they would receive a powerful stimulus from the banks themselves, who are certain to get rich if they can receive interest for their notes, when they are not bound to pay them, which is the plain English of suspending specie payments. The above are mere instances to illustrate the frauds which would be committed on the general government, and which it could not possibly resist, but by the agency of the national bank. It requires no great sagacity to foresee, that such a state of things would produce collusions extremely dangerous to the union. So deeply was Mr. Calhoun impressed with these views of the subject, that he laboured day and night, in the house, and out of it, during the progress of the bank bill, to communicate his impressions to the members of Congress. His views were so exclusively national, and so obviously disinterested, that he finally triumphed over the private interest and political opinion with which he had to contend. When the feelings and the interest of the moment shall have passed away, and posterity shall pronounce an impartial judgment on that measure, it will be sufficient glory for an American statesman, to have his name identified with the national bank.

During the same session in which the bank question was decided, the discussion of the direct tax was, by common consent, selected as the occasion of entering fully into the question, of what ought to be the policy of the United States in time of peace. The speech which Mr. Calhoun delivered on that occasion, is not surpassed by any that we have ever read, either of ancient or modern times. It is, in our opinion, a perfect model of parliamentary speaking. The political views presented are profound and accurate, and are enforced with all the power which truth possesses, when accompanied with an elevated dignity of sentiment. The course of policy which is recommended, if steadily pursued, cannot fail to carry the United States to the high and happy destinies, for which Providence seems to have created them.

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Speaking of the policy which ought to be pursued in relation to other nations, he said, "it is the duty of all nations, especially of one whose institutions recognise no principle of force, but appeal to virtue for their strength, to act with justice and moderation; with moderation approaching to forbearance. In all possible conflicts with foreign powers, our government should be able to make it manifest to the world, that it has justice on its side. But," said he, "as we render justice to all, so should we be prepared to exact it from all. Our conduct should not only be moderate and just, but as high minded as it is moderate and just. In the policy of nations," he said, "there were two extremes; one extreme in which justice and moderation may sink into feebleness; another in which that lofty spirit, which ought to animate all nations, particularly free ones, may mount up to military violence. These extremes ought to be equally avoided; but of the two," he considered "the former far the most dangerous and fatal. There were," he said, "two splendid examples of nations which had ultimately sunk by military violence—the Romans in ancient times, and the French in modern. But how numerous were the instances of nations sinking into nothingness through imbecility and apathy! They had not indeed struck the mind so forcibly as the instances just mentioned, because they had sunk ingloriously, without any thing in their descent to excite admiration or respect." He considered the extreme of weakness, not only the most dangerous in itself, but as that extreme to which the people of this country are peculiarly liable. "The people," said he "are high minded, but they are blessed with much happiness, moral, political and physical; this operates on the disposition and habits of this people, something like the effects attributed to southern climates; it disposes them to pleasure and inactivity, except in the pursuit of wealth. The nature of our foreign relations," he said, "increased our inclination to a feeble policy. We have indeed dangers to apprehend from abroad, but they are far off, at the distance

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of three thousand miles, which prevents that continued dread they would excite, if in our neighbourhood. Besides, we can have no foreign war that we should dread, but with Great Britain; but a war with her breaks in on the whole industry of the country, and affects all its private pursuits." Adverting to the probable policy of Great Britain, he said, "she was the most formidable power in the world, while the United States were the most growing; most rapidly improving in those very particulars in which Great Britain excels."

He asked, "if it could be reasonably expected, that the greater power would permit the less to attain its destined greatness, by natural growth, without interruption? He feared not. But admitting the councils of that nation to be governed by a degree of magnanimity which the world had never witnessed, and he was warranted in saying never would, might not some unforeseen collision involve us in war with that power? I am sure," said he, "future wars with Great Britain are not only probable, but they will certainly take place. Future wars," he feared, with the honourable speaker, "future wars, long and bloody, will exist between this country and Great Britain. He lamented it, but would not close his eyes on future events, and forfeit the high trust reposed in him. You will have," said he, "to encounter British jealousy and hostility in every shape. As far as she can, she will disgrace every thing connected with you. Her reviewers, her paragraphists, and travellers, will assail you and your institutions, and no means will be left untried to bring you to contemn yourselves, and be contemned by others. But," said he, "I thank my God, they have not the means of effecting it which they once had. No; the late war has given you a mode of thinking and acting, which forbids the acknowledgment of national inferiority, the greatest of political evils. Had we not encountered Great Britain, we should not have had the brilliant points to rest on, which we now have. We, too, have now our heroes and illustrious actions. If Britain has her Wellingtons, we have our Jacksons, our Browns, and

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our Scotts. If she has her naval heroes, we have them not less renowned, for they have snatched the laurel from her brow. It is impossible that we can now be degraded by comparisons. He then proceeded to consider the preparations which policy dictated. The extent of our preparations should be graduated, with reference to the character and capacity of Great Britain; a nation, said he, which excels, in means, all nations that now exist, or ever did exist, and, besides great moral resources, intelligent and renowned for masculine virtues. He considered the navy as the first object of attention; it was a species of force peculiarly adapted to our situation. Where, he asked, was Great Britain most vulnerable? In her commerce and navigation. There she is not only exposed, but *the blow* is fatal. There is her strength—there is the secret of her power. After enforcing the policy of increasing our naval force by a variety of practical views and illustrations, he proceeded to consider the military peace establishment, which he deemed small enough. "I know," said he, "the danger of large standing armies, and that the militia is the true force; that no nation can be safe at home and abroad, without an efficient militia. But the time of service ought to be extended, to enable them to acquire a knowledge of the duties of a camp, and let the habits of civil life be broken. Our defence," said he "ought to depend, on the land, on a regular draft from the body of the people. It is thus, in time of war, the business of recruiting will be dispensed with, a mode of defending the country every way uncongenial with our republican institutions; uncertain, slow in its operations, and expensive, it draws from society its worst materials, introducing into our army, of necessity, all the severities which are exercised in that of the most despotic government. Thus compounded, our army in a great degree loses that enthusiasm by which citizen soldiers, conscious of liberty, have ever been animated. All free nations of antiquity intrusted the defence of the country, not to the dregs of society, but to the body of citi-

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zens; hence that heroism, which modern times may admire, but cannot equal."

"I know," said he, "that I utter truths unpleasant to those who wish to enjoy liberty, without making the efforts necessary to secure it. It had been said by some physicians, that life was a forced state; the same might be said of freedom. It required efforts; it presupposed mental and moral qualities of a high order, to be generally diffused in the society where it existed. It mainly stood upon the faithful discharge of two great duties, which every citizen of proper age owed the republic; a wise and virtuous exercise of the right of suffrage, and a prompt and brave defence of the country in the hour of danger. The first symptom of decay had always appeared, in the backward and negligent discharge of the latter duty. Large standing and mercenary armies then became necessary; and those who were not willing to render the military service essential to the defence of their rights, soon found, as they ought to do, a master." He then proceeded to recommend the establishment of a system of roads and canals; but as he subsequently gave that subject a distinct discussion, we shall barely mention it here, as falling within his general summary of the policy of the country. He also adverted to the policy of encouraging domestic manufactures, not with a view to increase the national wealth, for he admitted that industry left to itself would most effectually promote that object, but as a means of defence during war. The principal encouragement, he conceived, should be given to those branches of domestic industry which provide the materials of clothing and defence. He also pointed out the necessity of fortifying the weak points of the coast, particularly the mouths of the Mississippi and the Chesapeake. He observed, in relation to the finances, that it was unwise to depend entirely upon imports, as the character of the national industry was rapidly changing. While a nation is entirely agricultural, depending for supply on foreign markets, its people, said he, may be taxed, through its imports, almost

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to the amount of its capacity. Foreign commerce was, however, daily bearing a less proportion to the national wealth, from the increase of manufactures. The financial resources of the nation would therefore daily become weaker and weaker, if we did not resort to other objects than our foreign commerce for taxation. Besides, he contended, that it was impossible to prepare a system of internal taxation in time of war, without great embarrassment. Convince the people, said he, that such measures are necessary, and they will maintain them. Already they go far, very far, before this house, in energy and public spirit. If ever measures of this description become unpopular, it will be by speeches here. Are any willing to lull the people into false security? The subject, said he, is grave; it is connected with the happiness and existence of the country. He sincerely hoped Congress were the *real agents of the people*, brought together, in the language of the constitution, not to consult their ease and convenience, but the general defence and common welfare. The measures he had proposed involved, no doubt, great expense; they required considerable sacrifices on the part of the people. But were they on that account to be rejected? We may dispense with the taxes—we may neglect every measure of precaution, and feel no immediate disaster; but in such a state of things, what virtuous, what wise citizens, but must look on the future with dread? The road, said he, that wisdom points out, leads up the steep, but leads also to security and lasting glory. The love of present ease and pleasure, that fatal weakness of human nature, has never failed, in individuals or nations, to sink them to disgrace and ruin. On the contrary, virtue and wisdom, which regard the future, which spurn the temptations of the moment, however rugged their path, end in happiness. Such, said he, are the universal sentiments of all wise writers, from the didactics of the philosophers, to the fictions of the poets. They agree that pleasure is a flowery path, leading off among groves and meadows, but ending in a gloomy and dreary wilderness. It is my wish, said he, to elevate the national sentiment, to

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that which every just and virtuous mind possesses. No effort was needed to impel us the opposite way; that might be too safely trusted to the frailties of our nature. This nation, said he, is in a situation, similar to that in which one of the most beautiful writers of antiquity paints Hercules in his youth; he represents the hero as retiring into the wilderness to deliberate on the course of life he ought to pursue. Two Goddesses approached him, one recommending a life of ease and pleasure, the other of labour and virtue. The hero adopted the counsel of the latter, and his fame and glory are known to the world. May this nation, the youthful Hercules, possessing his form and muscles, be inspired with his sentiments, and follow his example.

During the session of 1816–17, Mr. Calhoun proposed to set apart and pledge, as a fund for internal improvement, the bonus and United States share of the dividends of the national bank. On that question, he displayed the ability and zeal which have invariably characterized his efforts, on all great national subjects At peace with all the world, and abounding in pecuniary means, in the present state of party and sectional feelings, to what, said he, can we direct our resources and attention, more important than internal improvement? What can add more to the wealth, strength, and political prosperity of our country? After explaining the manner in which the contemplated improvements would promote the national wealth, he said there were higher considerations why Congress ought to take charge of the subject. If we were only to consider the pecuniary advantages of a good system of roads and canals, it might, indeed, admit of some doubt, whether they ought not to be left wholly to individual exertions; but when we come to consider how intimately the strength and political prosperity of the republic are connected with this subject, we find the most urgent reasons why we ought to apply our resources to them. In many respects, he said, no country of equal population and wealth possesses equal materials of power with ours. The people, in muscular power, in hardy

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enterprising habits, and in lofty and gallant courage, are surpassed by none. In one respect, and, in his opinion, in one alone, are we materially weak; we occupy a surface prodigiously great in proportion to our number. The common strength is brought to bear, with great difficulty, on the point menaced by the enemy. In the recent war, how much did we suffer for the want of them. Besides, the tardiness, and consequential inefficacy of our military movements, to what an increased expense was the country put, for the article of transportation alone? It was not in this respect alone that roads and canals add to the strength of the country; our power of raising revenue, in war, depends mainly upon them. In war, we must principally depend on internal taxes. What, then, is the result? The taxes are raised in every part of this extensive country uniformly; but the expenditure must, in its nature, be confined principally to the scene of military operations. This drains the circulating medium from one part, and accumulates it in another, and perhaps in a very distant one. Unless it can return through the operation of trade, the parts from which the constant drains take place must ultimately be impoverished. Commercial intercourse is the true remedy for this weakness; and the means by which that is to be effected, are, roads, canals, and the coasting trade. On these, said he, combined with domestic manufactures, does the moneyed capacity of this country, in war, depend. Without them, not only will we be unable to raise the necessary supplies, but the currency of the country must necessarily fall into the greatest disorder; such as we lately experienced.

But on this subject of national power, said he, what can be more important than a perfect unity in feelings and sentiments? And what can more powerfully tend to produce it, than overcoming the effects of distance? One hundred years ago, the most profound philosophers did not believe it possible for such an extent of country to enjoy a system of freedom. But we have not only realized what they supposed impossible, but such is the happy mould of our government,

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that much of our political happiness draws its origin from the extent of our republic. It has exempted us from most of the causes which distracted the small republics of antiquity. Let it, however, be for ever kept in mind, that it exposes us to the greatest of all calamities, next to the loss of liberty; and even to that, in its consequence, disunion. We are great, and rapidly, he was about to say fearfully, growing. This was our pride and our danger; our weakness and our strength. Little does he deserve, said he, to be intrusted with the liberties of this people, who does not raise his mind to these truths. We are under the most imperious obligations to counteract every tendency to disunion. The strongest of all cements is, undoubtedly, the wisdom, justice, and above all, the moderation of this house; yet the great subject on which we are deliberating, in this respect, deserves the most serious consideration. Those who understand the human heart best, said he, know how powerfully distance tends to break the sympathies of our nature. Nothing, not even dissimilarity of language, tends more to estrange man from man. Let us then bind our country together with a good system of roads and canals. Let us conquer space. The mail and the press, he said, were the nerves of the body politic. By them the slightest impression made on the most remote parts, is communicated to the whole system; and the more perfect the means of transportation, the more perfect and true the vibration. Adverting to the great natural and political advantages we enjoy, he said, we might raise our eyes to a most splendid future, if we only act in a manner worthy of those advantages. If, however, neglecting them, we permit a low, sordid, selfish, and sectional spirit, to take possession of this house, this happy scene will vanish. To legislate for our country, said he, requires not only the most enlarged views, but a species of self-devotion, not exacted in any other. In a country so extensive, and so various in its interests, what is necessary for the common good, may be apparently opposed to the interest of the particular sections. It must be submitted to as the con-

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dition of our greatness. But were we a small republic; were we confined to these ten miles square, the selfish instincts of our nature might in most cases be relied on, in the management of public affairs.

Having completed our review of the leading measures in which Mr. Calhoun acted a conspicuous part, while a member of the national legislature, we now proceed to consider him on a new theatre. He was appointed Secretary of War towards the close of the year 1817. It was a subject of sincere regret among many of his friends and admirers in various parts of the Union, that he accepted of this appointment. It was conjectured that those brilliant powers, which had rendered such signal services in the national legislature, would find no congenial employment in the formal routine of an office. But we now see that a truly great mind, will impart its own character to every thing around it. He has displayed a versatility of talent, which seems to qualify him for any station. In the war department, though, at the time of his appointment to it, he cannot be presumed to have possessed much practical acquaintance with its duties, suddenly we behold order rising out of confusion, light out of darkness. We behold a mind, remarkable for its comprehensiveness of view, devising a most perfect system for the orderly and prompt despatch of official duty in detail. He has in fact communicated to the department of war, an importance which it was not supposed to possess. Instead of being buried in the voluminous rubbish of his office, as some anticipated and predicted, his talents fill a much larger space in the public eye, than they ever did before. Within the very short period, during which he has filled the war department, he has given to it such an organization, as connected with the army, that an efficient system of responsibility is established, in all the branches of military service. This rigid system of control, over those officers to whom the disbursement of public money, and the disposal of public property, is confined, is of the utmost importance in preventing

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wasteful extravagance in the military expenditures. The general arrangements which have been made, in relation to the supply, distribution, and employment of the army, have been such, as at once to promote its health, morality, comfort, and utility. The attention of the Secretary of War, has also been actively directed to the great and important duty, of projecting and executing the "general defence" of the country, by fortifying our maritime frontier, extending our posts on the Indian frontier, and opening those military roads, so indispensable to the economy, promptness, and efficiency of military movements, in time of war. In short, he has imparted new life to the army, and such activity to the operations, for the permanent defence of the country, as will, in due time, secure our vulnerable points against foreign aggression, and our interior frontier from the bloody depredations of savage warfare. Since he has been in the war department, he has presented a number of very able and interesting reports to Congress. We propose to close this narrative, with a brief review of the principal of these, as they will more fully convey his views, on the various subjects to which they relate, than would be otherwise practicable.

On the 5th of December, 1818, he submitted to the House of Representatives, a report on the subject of Indian trade. This document is written with great ability, and renders a subject, in itself dry and unattractive, extremely interesting. Its investigations are profound, lucid, and philosophical, and its sentiments highly becoming the character of an American statesman. At the same time that the rights and interests of the United States are regarded, a humane attention is bestowed on the rights and interests of the savages. He recommends the abolition of the factories established by the government, and that the trade be opened to individual enterprise, under regulations adapted to the situation, local and civil, of the tribes with whom it should be prosecuted. For those tribes in the immediate vicinity of our settlements, he recommends the appointment of a superintendant, to be

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attached to the war department, who shall grant licenses to citizens of the United States, of good moral character, to trade with the aforesaid tribes. That the traders shall annually pay for such license a sum not less than 100, nor more than 500 dollars, according as the President shall prescribe. That the licenses should be granted to trade at specified stations, which should not be changed but with the superintendant's approbation; and that the trader should give bond, with a heavy penalty, to obey the regulations which should be made for the government of that trade. The reason given by the Secretary for requiring the payment of a considerable sum for a license, is, that it would diminish the number of petty traders, and throw the trade into the hands of a few traders of considerable capital, upon whom the government would have a stronger hold, and over whom the superintendant could exercise a more effectual supervision and control. It is not of so much importance to the Indians, to obtain their supplies a few cents cheaper, as that they shall be protected from the frauds and impositions to which their ignorance and weakness would expose them, if not protected by the government. He conceived that large capitalists would also be deeply interested in preserving peace, as war would break up their arrangements; and would also be interested in promoting industry among the Indians, as, from this source, must be derived the returns for their merchandise. By rendering the trading houses stationary, each would form the nucleus of an Indian settlement; and by giving greater density and steadiness to their population, ideas of separate property would be introduced, and their ultimate civilization hastened. "The neighbouring tribes," says he, "have in a great measure ceased to be objects of terror, and have become objects of commiseration. The time seems to have arrived, when our policy towards them should undergo an important change. They neither are, in fact, nor ought to be, considered as independent nations. Our views of their interest, and not their own, ought to govern them. By a proper combination of force and persuasion, of

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the extension of our military posts on the western frontier, so necessary to protect our border citizens from the vengeful and desolating warfare of their savage neighbours. Any apprehensions which might be entertained of the army, scattered as it is, over such a mighty surface, and bearing so small a proportion to the population of the country, savoured, he conceived, more of timidity than wisdom. He next proceeded to consider the propriety of reducing the officers, particularly of the staff. This, too, he thought unwise. The great number of our posts, in proportion to our army, render it necessary that our staff should be relatively larger than is requisite in European armies. He conceived, that no part of the military organization required more attention than the staff; in every service it was invariably the last in attaining perfection. In peace it should receive a perfect organization, and the officers be trained to method and punctuality; so that, at the commencement of a war, it would be only necessary to give it the necessary enlargement. With a defective staff, our military operations must be carried on under great disadvantages, and, at the beginning of a war, expose us to great embarrassments, losses, and disasters.

In discussing the necessity of an enforcement of responsibility and economy in the administration of the army, he said, "here all savings are real gain, not only in a moneyed, but in a moral and political point of view. An inefficient administration, without economy or responsibility, not only exhausts the public resources, but strongly tends to contaminate the moral and political principles of the officers charged with the disbursements of the army." He then showed, that the organization of the war department, was nearly perfect in this respect, every department of the army charged with disbursements, having its proper head responsible for its administration. He said, "that the principal losses had been sustained by the want of accountability in those charged with the care and management of the public property. Every article of public property," he said, "ought to be in charge

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of some person responsible for it. Heretofore, great laxity had prevailed in this respect, and returns of public property had rarely been exacted."

"On the quality of the ration," (which he next proceeded to consider,) he said, "the health, comfort, and efficiency of the army mainly depended. All human efforts must, of necessity, be limited by the means of subsistence. Food sustains the immense machinery of war, and gives the impulse to all its operations; and if this essential be withdrawn, even for a few days, the whole must cease to act." He then proceeds to point out such alterations as had been made in the quality of the ration, to secure the health and comfort of the army. Adverting to the plentiful mode of living, to which the poorest of our citizens are accustomed, and which renders them less capable than the people of most countries to sustain more privations, he says, "there is something shocking to the feelings, that, in a country of plenty beyond all others, in a country which ordinarily is so careful of the happiness and life of its meanest citizens, its brave defenders, who are not only ready, but anxious to expose their lives for the safety and glory of their country, should, through a defective system of supply, be permitted almost to starve, or perish by the poison of unwholesome food, as has frequently been the case. Moreover, nothing, he conceives, adds more to the expense of military operations, and exposes more to disasters, than unwholesome supplies of food. The principal changes which had been made in the ration, were the substitution, twice a week, of fresh meat for salt; the substitution, in the southern division, of bacon and kiln-dried corn, to a certain extent, for pork and wheat flour, and the increase of the vegetable part of the ration, with a view to which, orders had been given, at all the permanent posts, to cultivate a sufficient supply of garden vegetables for the use of the troops; and at the posts remote from the settled parts of the country, the orders had been extended to the cultivation of corn, and the supply of the meat part of the ration, both to avoid the ex-

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pense of transportation, and to secure, at all times, a supply within the posts themselves. The spirit part of the ration, as a regular issue, he thought, should be dispensed with. It both produces, and perpetuates, habits of intemperance, destructive alike of the health, and moral and physical energy of the soldiers. If the spirits were only issued occasionally, when great efforts were necessary, he conceived, that important benefits would result from it, while its noxious and deleterious effects would be avoided."

On the subject of the establishment of a *commissariat*, with which the report closes, he says, the defects of the mere contract system are so universally acknowledged by those who have experienced its operation, in the late war, that it cannot be necessary to make many observations in relation to it. Nothing can appear more absurd, than that the success of the most important military operations, on which the fate of the country may depend, should ultimately rest on men who are subject to no military responsibility, and on whom there is no other hold than the penalty of a bond. When we add to this observation, that it is often the interest of the contractor to fail, at the most critical juncture, when the means of supply become most expensive, it seems strange that the system should have been continued for a single campaign.

As subsidiary to the permanent defence of the country, Mr. Calhoun has been uniformly a zealous advocate of military schools. In a report which he submitted to Congress on that subject, he suggests, as an argument for the extension and improvement of those schools, that, in the high state of improvement which the art of war has now attained, the fate of battle depends mainly upon the skill of the officers. To form an able general, is now a work of much time, study, and experience, whereas, among the great nations of antiquity, so simple was the machinery of war, that a competent commander might, on an emergency, be taken from the ranks. So easy was it to get a general among the Romans, qualified for commanding, that a Consul, after serving one year, was

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not re-eligible. But at present all the sciences contribute their aid to that of war. It is the intellect which plans, more than the hand which executes, that now turns the tide of victory. If, therefore, we have a sufficient number of able officers, with the excellent materials for soldiers which our population furnishes, we can have an army promptly prepared for any emergency. When we consider the habits of our people, immersed in gainful pursuits, and habitually neglectful of military duties, the necessity of giving to our military school the extension and improvement recommended by the Secretary, will be still more apparent.

The last report, of which we propose to give a brief summary, is that which he submitted on the 7th of January, 1819, on the establishment of roads and canals, with a view to military operations. This is one of the most able and masterly state papers we have ever read. We here behold a great mind filled with the magnitude of the subject, elevating its views to the splendid destinies of this rising republic, and in directing a policy worthy of that republic and of those destinies. It seems to us impossible for any American to peruse that document, without being fascinated with the views presented in it. Our country is the last, and only refuge of freedom. In the old world, her mansions are desolate, and her altars are stained with the bloody offerings of despotism. The hopes of mankind are centered in America, and the political destiny of nations measurably depends on our conduct and example. It is our first [illegible]ty as a nation to defend our happy homes, the blessed abodes of freedom, from foreign aggression; whether it be founded in ordinary motives, or in hostility to the principles of our government. Our next duty is to pursue a course of policy so national and elevated, as to promote our true happiness and glory. Thus shall we command the respect, even of the nations who hate us for our happiness, and give to the cause of freedom an ascendency in the opinions of mankind. Under these circumstances, how flattering to the manly pride of an American, to witness the

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operations of the active, bold, and comprehensive genius of such a statesman as Mr. Calhoun, in projecting those noble schemes of national improvement and defence, which, if executed, must remain lasting monuments of the safety, happiness, and glory of our country. The Secretary commences his report by briefly adverting to the general political advantages of a good system of roads and canals, independent of their importance in a military point of view.

But leaving these more general views, he proceeds to show the peculiar importance of such a system to the United States, with a view to military operations, from the geographical and political situation of our country. Our physical power is very small, when compared with the immense extent of our territory, circled as it is, to a very great extent, by a maritime frontier exposed to the incursions and ravages of an invading foe. When, in addition to this, we consider that our institutions, maxims, and modes of thinking, are all unfriendly to large standing armies, and that our principal reliance must be on the militia, to avert and roll back the torrent of invasion, the necessity of good military roads and canals, for rapid marches, and prompt concentration, becomes doubly apparent. The experience of the late war, says the Secretary, proves, in the present state of our internal improvements, the delay, the uncertainty, the anxiety, and the exhausting effects resulting from frequent draughts on the militia. The facts are too recent to require details, and the impression too deep to be soon forgotten. As it becomes a wise nation to profit by experience, he conceives, that the government is under the most sacred obligation to prevent, by a timely and judicious application of the national resources, a recurrence, in future wars, of a state of things so calamitous. In all military preparations, he conceives, that our attention should be especially directed to the eastern, northern, and southern frontiers. As all our military efforts, growing out of a European war, must be directed towards one of these, those roads and canals which would enable the government

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cheaply and promptly to concentrate its forces on their vulnerable points, are, in a military view, of most importance. Beginning with the eastern frontier, he says, it extends from the St. Croix to the St. Mary's, a distance of about two thousand one hundred miles, and is studded with our most populous cities, the depots of the wealth and commerce of the country. "Against a line, so long, so weak, so exposed, and presenting such strong motives for depredations, hostilities, the most harassing and exhausting, may be carried on by a naval power; and should the subjugation of the country ever be attempted, it is probable that against this frontier, facing Europe, the seat of the great powers of the world, the principal efforts would be turned." To a navy, and a judicious and strong system of fortification, he thinks, we should look for much of our security on this frontier; but the importance of good roads and canals, in drawing our forces from a distance to the point exposed, with celerity and cheapness, is not thereby diminished. To resist extraordinary efforts, aiming at conquest, should it ever be attempted, the resources of the whole community must be brought into action. For this purpose, troops must be marched, and munitions of war transported, either along the line of the coast, or from the interior of the Atlantic States; or, should the occasion demand it, from the States west of the mountains. For the purpose of transporting our military means from the interior of the Atlantic States, directly to the east, the Secretary thinks, the numerous rivers which, at short intervals, intersect the range of country between the mountains and the ocean, and the great roads, through which the commercial operations of the country are carried on, aided by steamboat navigation, will present great facilities. The improvement of these rivers and roads may be safely left to the States, and the commercial cities immediately interested. "Very different," says he, "is the case of the great and important line of communication, extending along the coast, through the Atlantic States. No object of the kind is more

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important, and there is none to which State or individual capacity is more inadequate. It must be perfected by the general government, or not perfected at all: at least, for many years. No one or two States have a sufficient interest. It is immediately beneficial to more than half the States of the Union, and, without the aid of the general government, would require their co-operation. It is, at all times, a most important object to the nation; and in a war with a naval power, is almost indispensable to our military, commercial, and financial operations. It may, in a single view, be considered the great artery of the country; and when the coasting trade is suspended by war, the vast intercourse between the north and south, which annually requires five hundred thousand tons of shipping, and which is necessary to the commerce, the agriculture, and manufactures of more than half the union, seeks this channel of communication. If it were thoroughly opened, by land and water; if Louisiana were connected by a durable and well finished road with Maine, and Boston with Savannah, by a well established line of inland navigation, for which so many facilities are presented, more than half the pressure of war would be removed. A country so vast in its means, and abounding, in its various latitudes, with almost all the products of the globe, is a world of itself; and with that facility of intercourse, to perfect which, the disposable means of the country are adequate, would flourish and prosper, under the pressure of a war with any power." But confining his views merely to the military uses of the contemplated communications, he states, that the line of inland navigation, which might be completed for sea vessels, for three millions of dollars, would deprive a naval enemy, in a great degree, of the great advantage he now has, by rapid transitions from point to point, on the coast, and making his attack before an adequate force can be arrayed to resist it. "In fact," says he, "the capacity for rapid and prompt movements and concentration, would be to the full, as much in our power. We

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would have in most of the points of attack, a shorter line to move over, in order to concentrate our means; and aided by steam boats, would have the capacity to pass it in a shorter time, and with greater certainty, than what an enemy, even with a naval superiority, would have to attack us." After sustaining these views by a variety of illustrative remarks, he proceeds: "By this speedy communication, the regular forces, with the militia of the cities and their neighbourhood, would be sufficient to repel ordinary invasions, and would either prevent, or greatly diminish, the harassing calls upon the militia of the interior. If to these considerations we add the character of the climate of the southern portion of the Atlantic frontier, so fatal to those whose constitutions are not inured to it, the value of this system of defence, by regular troops, and the militia accustomed to the climate, will be greatly enhanced. Should this line of inland navigation be constructed, to enjoy its benefits fully, it will be necessary to cover it against the naval operations of an enemy. It is thought, that this may be easily effected to the south of the Chesapeake, by land and steam batteries. That bay is itself one of the most important links in this line of communication; and its defence against a naval force ought, if practicable, to be rendered complete." He then proceeds to consider the communications necessary, between the western states, and the Atlantic frontier. "Should a war of conquest," says he, "ever be waged against us, an event not probable, but not to be laid entirely out of view, the roads and canals necessary to complete the communication between the coast, and that portion of our country, would be of the utmost importance. The interest of commerce, and the spirit of rivalry, between the great Atlantic cities, will do much to perfect the means of intercourse with the west. But such great undertakings, so interesting, in every point of view, to the whole Union, and which may ultimately become necessary for its defence, the general government, he conceives, having a deep stake in them, ought to bear a proportional share of the expense of

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their construction. He next proceeds to give a detailed statement of the roads and canals which have been commenced, and which will be necessary for the defence of the northern frontier, bordering on Canada and the Lakes. The principal of these are, a canal, or water communication, between Albany, and Lake George, and Lake Ontario, and between Pittsburgh and Lake Erie; and the road already commenced, from Pittsburgh to Sackett's Harbour. A water communication from Pittsburgh to Lake Erie, would be of great importance, and the proximity of the navigable waters of the Alleghany River to the Lake, would render the execution cheap and easy. Pittsburgh, the great military depot of the country west of the Alleghany, would furnish military supplies, with facility, through this communication, to the upper Lakes. To these he adds, the military road, already commenced, from Detroit to Ohio, and a canal from the Illinois River to Lake Michigan. For the defence of the frontier of the Gulf of Mexico, though weak at present, nature, he says, has done much. The Bay of Mobile, and the entrance into the Mississippi, through all its channels, are highly capable of defence. A military survey has been made, and the necessary fortifications have been commenced, and will in a few years be completed. But the real strength of this frontier is the Mississippi, which is no less the cause of its security, than of its commerce and wealth. Its rapid current, aided by the force of steam, can in the hour of danger, concentrate at once an irresistible force. Made strong by this noble river, little remains to be done, by roads and canals, for the defence of the southern frontier. The roads from Milledgeville, and the Tennessee river, to New-Orleans, and the inland navigation, through the canal of Carondelet, Lake Ponchartrain, and the Islands along the coast of Mobile, covered against the operations of a naval force, are all the improvements he thinks necessary to protect this distant and important frontier.

He next proceeds to indicate the means by which the pro-

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jected works may be executed. As the basis of the system, he recommends, that Congress should direct surveys and estimates to be made, for which duty, the army would furnish able military and topographical engineers, and it would be necessary only to associate with them, one or more skillful civil engineers, to aid in the construction of the proposed works: he recommends the employment of the army, to a certain extent, increasing their pay while thus employed. The propriety of employing the army, on works of public utility, cannot be doubted. A mere garrison life, is equally hostile to its vigour and discipline. Both officers and men become the subjects of its deleterious effects. "But," says he, "too much reliance ought not to be placed in the labour of the army, scattered as it must be, over our immense circumference of frontier." The report closes by pointing out the state of the military roads, then in progress, which had been carried on by the soldiers, the only force in the power of the war department.

From the foregoing sketch of the state papers, which Mr. Calhoun, as Secretary of War, has presented to Congress, the best estimate can be formed of the ability and zeal, with which he has discharged the important duties of his department. His active mind seems to have pervaded and analyzed the great and complicated mass of our national interests, and to have formed almost a new creation, in the military department of the government. The subject rises into importance, under the action of his inventive powers, and nothing seems to have escaped the grasp of his genius.

Mr Calhoun is of a lean frame, and rather above the ordinary stature; his countenance is striking, and prepossessing; his eyes are large, brilliant, and penetrating. A stranger, in a casual interview, would pronounce him to be no ordinary man. When engaged in conversation, his countenance is lighted up into unusual animation, indicating by its changes the various and rapid intellectual movements within. His manners are plain, unassuming and easy, the unaffected off-

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spring of general kindness and good will. His colloquial powers are of the first order. The most ordinary topics become interesting, from the new and striking relations in which he presents them, and the most difficult are made plain, by his powers of simplification. The distinguished feature of his mind, is the power of analysis. This may be characteristically denominated the investigating faculty of the human mind. It is by this, that the involved, and variously shaded, and associated masses of ideas, that form the most important subjects of human inquiry, are resolved into their simple elements, and thrown into such lucid arrangement, as to evolve light from darkness. In short, it is the perfection of this power, which constitutes human genius, in the more enlarged acceptation of that term. Not that genius, which, soaring above the stubborn realities of things, dazzles, by its meteor splendours, only to increase the surrounding darkness; but that useful and protecting genius, to which nations look up for succour and for safety, in those rare and extraordinary combinations of their affairs, of which history furnishes so many examples. To an American statesman, occupying a political theatre of great novelty, and engaged in the active administration of a government, unprecedented in the recorded experience of mankind, such combinations must frequently occur. On such occasions, he will in vain consult his files for a precedent. Thrown upon the resources of his own mind, he can extricate himself from his difficulties, only by ascending to general principles, and applying them with skill and judgment to the circumstances of his affairs. Most of our political errors result from viewing things in the mass. It is thus that the splendid examples of nations, sanctify errors and abuses. The lights of history are perfectly delusive to the statesman, who does not mark the distinctions as well as the analogies presented. In this respect, the mind of Mr. Calhoun is very happily organized and trained. It not only possesses the power of analysis in a very high degree, but from its ceaseless activity, has acquired a store of general

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principles, on all occasions ready for use. Questions of the greatest difficulty and novelty, by the aid of this power of analysis, are subjected to the test of these general principles with promptness and facility.

As a statesman, Mr. Calhoun is unquestionably one of the brightest ornaments of his country. To an ardent patriotism, he adds a stern and manly independence, which disdains to calculate the consequences of discharging his duty. This firmness of purpose, this political intrepidity, results from conscious rectitude and full conviction. On all important subjects, he forms his opinions with deliberate caution; but, when they are once formed, he adheres to them with a firmness, which nothing can shake, and pursues them with an ability and perseverance, which nothing can resist. He has, with an unvarying consistency, pursued a course purely national, regardless of sectional interests. He is not one of those timid and time-serving politicians, who mark and follow "the shiftings of the popular breeze." Looking forward with a sagacious eye, to what will and must be the situation of his country, he proposes measures adapted to that situation, before their necessity has become generally apparent, and carries public opinion with him, instead of waiting to follow it in inglorious safety. In all questions, where sectional interests have been involved, he has invariably pursued a liberal and magnanimous policy. His political opinions and principles do not take their tone and temperament from the section of the country to which he is attached. Deeply impressed with the importance of preserving the Union, it has been his constant effort to inspire sentiments of self-devotion and nationality, in the various geographical sections of the country. Beyond all doubt, our destinies are bound up in the Union, and will be bright or bloody, accordingly as that shall be preserved sacred or shattered in the storms of human passions. "Little does he deserve to be intrusted with the liberties of this people, who does not raise his mind to these truths." A devoted admirer of our repub-

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lican institutions, it is his great aim, to give durability to our form of government, and his great ambition to render apparent to the whole world, its decided superiority to all the other governments on earth. No statesman has studied its principles more thoroughly; none has reflected more anxiously upon the means and measures necessary to preserve and perpetuate them. As a public man, he is distinguished for that inflexible integrity, and unsuspecting purity, which are the ornaments of his private character. In the midst of party excitement, all have concurred in ascribing to him the most elevated, national, and disinterested principles of actions. Detesting the arts of intrigue and management, he pursues a course, open, undisguised, fearless, and undesigning.

He is an attentive and philosophical observer of men and things, and places greater reliance on the knowledge thus acquired, than from any other source. He is an excellent judge of human nature, and has studied the character and genius of his countrymen with great success. In all great questions of national policy, he deems that the peculiar mould of our government, and the character of the people, are considerations of the first importance, and indispensable to a correct and safe decision. He looks upon history as a record of embodied principles, and not as a book of precedents. The policy that would be wise among one people, and under one form of government, is not, as a matter of course, suited to the situations and circumstances of another people, having a different form of government. In our opinion, there are two classes of politicians, very opposite in their cha. acter, who are equally remote from the true standard of wisdom. The one consists of mere men of precedent, the blind and indiscriminating followers of any path, whether made by folly or wisdom; and whether strewed with ruins, or covered with trophies: the other, of mere men of theory, who, regardless of the settled habits of the community, erect in their own minds an ideal phantom of perfection, at whose voracious shrine, all existing establishments

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are offered up, however endeared by habit, or consecrated by time. Between these two extremes, we think Mr. Calhoun pursues that middle course, which wisdom indicates. He is aware, that all great masses, or communities of men, are, in a political point of view, beings of habit, and must, to a certain extent, adhere to forms and establishments, merely because they have long existed, and have become incorporated and intervolved with the structure of society; but he is equally aware of the vicissitudes and progressive improvement of human affairs, which indicate progressive and corresponding improvements in human institutions, as the only means of avoiding sudden changes and bloody revolutions. His career, heretofore, has been of uncommon usefulness and celebrity, and furnishes the strongest grounds for the future expectations of his country. Since he entered the national councils, his name has been identified with almost every important measure adopted by the government. No man of his age, in any country, has rendered more signal services to the public; none has more deservedly acquired an extended fame, embodied in so many noble monuments, and perpetuated by so many endearing national recollections. We may venture to predict, that while history preserves a faithful record of the times in which he has acted, his name will be remembered with pride, and his services with gratitude, by the nation that claims him as her son.

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